

# Friends at Court

## GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- August 2, Sunday.—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Stephen I., Pope and Martyr.
- 3, Monday.—The Finding of the Body of St. Stephen, First Martyr.
- 4, Tuesday.—St. Dominic, Confessor.
- 5, Wednesday.—Dedication of St. Mary's, Rome.
- 6, Thursday.—Transfiguration of Our Lord.
- 7, Friday.—St. Cajetan, Confessor.
- 8, Saturday.—St. Cyriacus and Companions, Martyrs.

### Dedication of the Church of Our Lady of Snows.

The Church of Our Lady of Snows, or, as it is more frequently called, St. Mary Major, is one of the four great basilicas of Rome, and the largest and most celebrated of the many churches in that city which are dedicated to the Mother of God. Built in the fourth century, under Pope Liberius, it was rebuilt on a magnificent scale in the following century. The title of 'Our Lady of Snows' has reference to a tradition connected with the building of the church.

### Transfiguration of Our Lord.

The miraculous Transfiguration of our Blessed Lord, in the presence of the Apostles Peter, James, and John, is narrated by St. Matthew in that portion of his Gospel which is read at the Mass on the second Sunday in Lent.

## GRAINS OF GOLD

### TO-MORROW.

The road so hard to travel, you think—

Ah—yes, it is true—

Yet never so long and weary a way,  
But it turned into pleasant paths some day.

The burden of life so heavy to bear—

Each heart hath its own;

And never a cross did the good God send,  
But a brighter crown awaited the end.

The world is gloomy, and skies are grey,

The sunshine will come.

The tears you are shedding in bitter sorrow  
Are making the rainbow of hope for to-morrow.

Nothing is so new as what has long been forgotten.

If thou find truth and love in thyself thou shalt be able to find them also in the lives of thy fellows.

To do what seems right may involve an extra struggle sometimes, but one may be sure that in the long run it will bring the most happiness.

'As the ring is the sign of marriage, so is adversity, both corporal and spiritual, patiently borne for the love of God, a most true pledge of divine election, and is like a marriage of the soul with God.'—St. Gertrude.

God pity and soften the father whose children fear him, who grow silent as his foot crosses the threshold, who shun the room he darkens with his presence! God bless the generous, cheerful, good-natured father, who though weary after the labor of the day, still forgets his cares and fills the house with joy and light! His face is a never-failing source of gladness to those who love him, and when he comes home there is a headlong race and scramble to see who shall kiss father first. Such a greeting is a full payment for all the toils and vexations of the day.

Woman will always be more or less of an enigma, and it is little wonder that she is so seldom understood by the sterner sex. In nothing is she more baffling than in her capacity for suffering. There has never been a war or any great calamity in which her courage, her power of endurance, and her self-sacrifice have not been the admiration of the world; yet these same women are liable to cry if the muffin burns or the new hat is a failure. It is a woman's way—God made her for the home, and its small happenings are comedies and tragedies in her life;

it does seem a pity that the creature who is capable of such heroic action, if occasion demands, should be so ignominiously defeated by the 'pin-pricks' of everyday life. Nine times out of ten it is a case of nerves, of too close confinement indoors, and too much routine in her work.

# The Storyteller

## ALESSANDRO

(Concluded.)

When I passed through Maddalena's open door, I found her sitting idle, without hope, stricken to the heart. 'You must have some breakfast, Maddalena,' I said. She shook her head. 'This is nonsense,' I went on. 'Nicola will be found, and you will be ill; I will cook your breakfast, and you must eat it.' I had hoped my words would rouse her—the idea of the Signora waiting on her—but they failed utterly. Her eyes never left the open door that showed the steep little street and the olive hills above it. I soon had a makeshift meal ready, and she ate it obediently. I do not think she had touched food since the morning of the day before.

'Maddalena,' I repeated to her, 'you must not despair. Nicola will come back; he is a big boy, and can take care of himself. If only Alessandro were home he would know where to look for him. Let us go to look for him. Come—now.' I thought anything would be better than this dumb despair.

She looked at me startled. 'Where would the Signora go?' They were the first words she had spoken, and I felt rejoiced.

'To the sea—first—to see if Alessandro's boat is in sight.' We went out into the brilliant sunlight. She shaded her eyes for a moment like a creature blinded, and would have turned back, but I took her hand in mine and led her on, praying that the joyous day would put hope into her heart. I think it did, for soon she was talking to me—telling me all that had happened since early Friday morning, when she had punished Nicola.

'Why had Alessandro gone to V—?' I asked. This, too, she told me slowly, in a dull monotone—as if it all concerned some one else. He had again asked her to marry him, and she had said 'No.'

'You do not love him?' I queried.

'Second marriages are not right,' she answered, and went on to tell me how Alessandro had become angry; he would leave M— and go to America; so yesterday he had sailed for V—, a busy seaport some miles south. I looked at Maddalena in amazement. She was sending Alessandro—happy, wholesome Alessandro—to that land of violent contrasts. My next words came quickly, and were not premeditated, for a faint color crept into the pale cheeks, and she asked me timidly:

'Does the Signora think to marry again is not wrong?' I was glad she put it that way, for I could answer truthfully.

'Decidedly, not wrong, Maddalena.'

'Ah, Signora,' she cried, gazing across the shining water. 'Why does he not come? He would find my Nicola. Suppose I never see Nicola again, never hear his voice, never hold him in my arms. He is lying somewhere hurt, and I cannot get to him.' Sobbing violently she called: 'Alessandro, come quickly, come, come! You will find him.' Then turning to me as the sobs wore themselves out: 'Ah, Signora, I must go back—maybe he is at home—I should not have left.' Breathlessly she flew up the sea-wall steps and did not slacken her speed until she reached her house.

It was past noon when Alessandro's boat came in. He had with him a strip of paper, for which he had paid, that entitled him to be carried across the dark ocean, away from bright Italy, to the modern Land of Promise. He had also a letter—he had not paid for this, it was tendered him freely, payment would come later—to a man in this promised land, a man who was guaranteed to wring water from a stone. Armed with these bits of paper, harmless in appearance as the three wishes of the fairy tale, but quite as subtly malicious, he secured his boat and turned toward home. That he would never see Maddalena again he had quite determined. He would become an Americano and—maybe—when he came home in two or three years, his pockets lined with yellow gold, as the man had promised, he would buy the villa on the hill, and then—maybe then— They were very childish thoughts: we who are wise in the world's wisdom know how absurdly childish they were; but to Alessandro—whose love and pride had been wounded by Maddalena's refusal—they were very real, and, as a child would, he found comfort in them. I saw his broad shoulders moving steadily up the narrow street, his head well back, looking neither to the right nor the left. With a hasty word to Maddalena I rushed through the door, stumbled down the crooked steps, and caught him before he disappeared.